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Abstract and Synthesis FIAE Ch. 3

**Abstract**

Chapter 3 of FIAE begins to discuss assessment and different ways that it can be harnessed in a positive way. Wormeli describes that there are 3 major categories of assessment that should all be integrated into a unit in order to provide full understanding of the students prior knowledge, progressing knowledge, and level of mastery once the unit is complete. These three categories of assessment include pre-assessment, formative assessment, and summative assessment respectively. The importance of differentiating assessment is also expressed in the chapter. Details about common errors or pitfalls in assessment are put forth in order to provide a better understanding of the most effective ways to assess.

**Synthesis**

The public educational system seems to have somehow inadvertently put an extremely negative stigma on the word “assessment”. The word alone can bring students to their knees. Our government adversely pushes for more assessment as our global rank in educational development slides down the charts. Two factions of left and right have debated the topic for decades discussing whether it’s better to hold teachers, students, or entire administrations accountable for failures. But alas, Devin shows us that there is light at the end of the tunnel when he says, “I found this chapter to be really beneficial in its ability to take the negative connotation away from the topic of assessment”, and remove negativity we shall.

By addressing the three forms of assessment and making clear to the students the purpose of what they are doing during all three phases, we are able to provide them a better picture of why assessment can be beneficial. Meghan summed this up perfectly when she said: “This means that students are more willing to put in the work to understand the concept when they are able to understand a clear point or reason for needing to learn the information”. Starting with pre-assessment, teachers can get a better picture of where each individual’s abilities are before determining where and how they will start instruction. For student’s, pre-assessment allows them a sneak peek into what they will be learning over the course of the year. Ms. Libby touched on this idea as well by explaining, “it will be exciting to learn the answers since they will want to strive to get the correct answers so their grade on the test will be shown as improvement”. But recognizing that the world, particularly the field of education is not always utopian in nature, she elaborated with this important concept that we should not forget “There are many factors that can influence someone’s day and it will affect everything they do. If we penalize the students because of one test or quiz they did badly on, than we are not letting them show up their true potential”.

Formative assessment seems to be what most of us were least familiar with prior to these readings. Without formative assessment throughout the curriculum however, there is no way for teachers to be certain about where their student’s level of mastery is and where they could use improvement.

“Too many teachers have a proclivity toward a know-it-all bravado… it is important to keep ourselves in check…” – Cole

I know that some of us “warriors” are subconsciously inclined toward this kind of behavior since it allows us to avoid prior planning and teach in the moment based off our intuition, but recognizing the possible failures of that method of teaching is extremely important. Besides how formative assessment can be used to help the teacher, however, there are ways in which a student may benefit from it as well. Formative assessments can be used in portfolio’s that display a sort of timeline of learning for the students. When a student is able to reflect on and be conscious of their ability to learn new information, they become more confident in their ability to tackle new information, and may even develop better strategies to internalize it.

Lastly, summative assessments provide a final reflection on whether or not the student is meeting the course goals. This process can either go entirely wrong and ruin all of the hard work everyone has put in during the course of the unit, or it can go extremely well and students will be filled with pride and confidence to move forward and accomplish more goals. This all depends on how well we are able to clearly outline the goals of the unit within the questions of the test, and how well we are able to differentiate assessment in order to appeal to all of the MI’s in the classroom. There is no sense in committing to MI theory when doing lessons and activities and then drop the ball when it comes time to assess. It is also important that prior to this time, students have been provided real-world examples of why understanding the core principles are important in real life. I am pleased to hear from Matt that his goal as an educator includes this: “I will make sure to talk about, and show my students how they can apply what they are learning to real life practices”. Isn’t this familiar? I would like to point out that Matt knew this before even coming in to class yesterday.